Overview of Key Components of a Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System

March 27, 2014

Critical Questions & Decisions

- Is the system reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness?

- Are resources targeted effectively to those with the greatest needs, including those who are unsheltered?

- Does the community have the right balance of interventions (permanent supportive housing, rapid re-housing, etc...) to respond to local needs?

Critical Questions & Decisions

- Is the system exiting people from homelessness to permanent housing quickly and using the right size of intervention based on their needs?

- How can the community align resources and design its system most strategically?

- Do strong connections exist between the homeless response system and intake processes for mainstream services?

How Do Communities Make Progress?

Five Key Tactics

1. **Use Data to Drive Results:** Use data to measure system and program performance and inform resource allocation decisions

2. **Leverage Mainstream Resources:** Engage mainstream systems and integrate those resources— housing, job training, child care, health care, etc …

3. **Be Frugal – Target Wisely:** Provide the right intervention at the right time to the right individual or family through a coordinated assessment system

Five Key Tactics

4. **Be Smart – Use Evidence:** Adopt Housing First practices to offer individuals and families experiencing homelessness immediate access to permanent affordable or supportive housing, without clinical prerequisites or other barriers

5. **Expand the Pie Strategically:** Use existing resources in smarter ways to help make clear case for new investments of Federal, State, local, and private sector resources to scale the practices and innovations that work

System Building: Retooling the Crisis Response System

Retooled Crisis Response System

- **Design an approach that recognizes that people take many paths to assistance,** and intake processes for mainstream systems (e.g., cash assistance) can serve as front doors.

- **Effective, assertive outreach is essential,** especially for people who are unsheltered, since the system only works if people get connected.

- **System design must reflect local community context**, including HMIS, geography, and many other factors
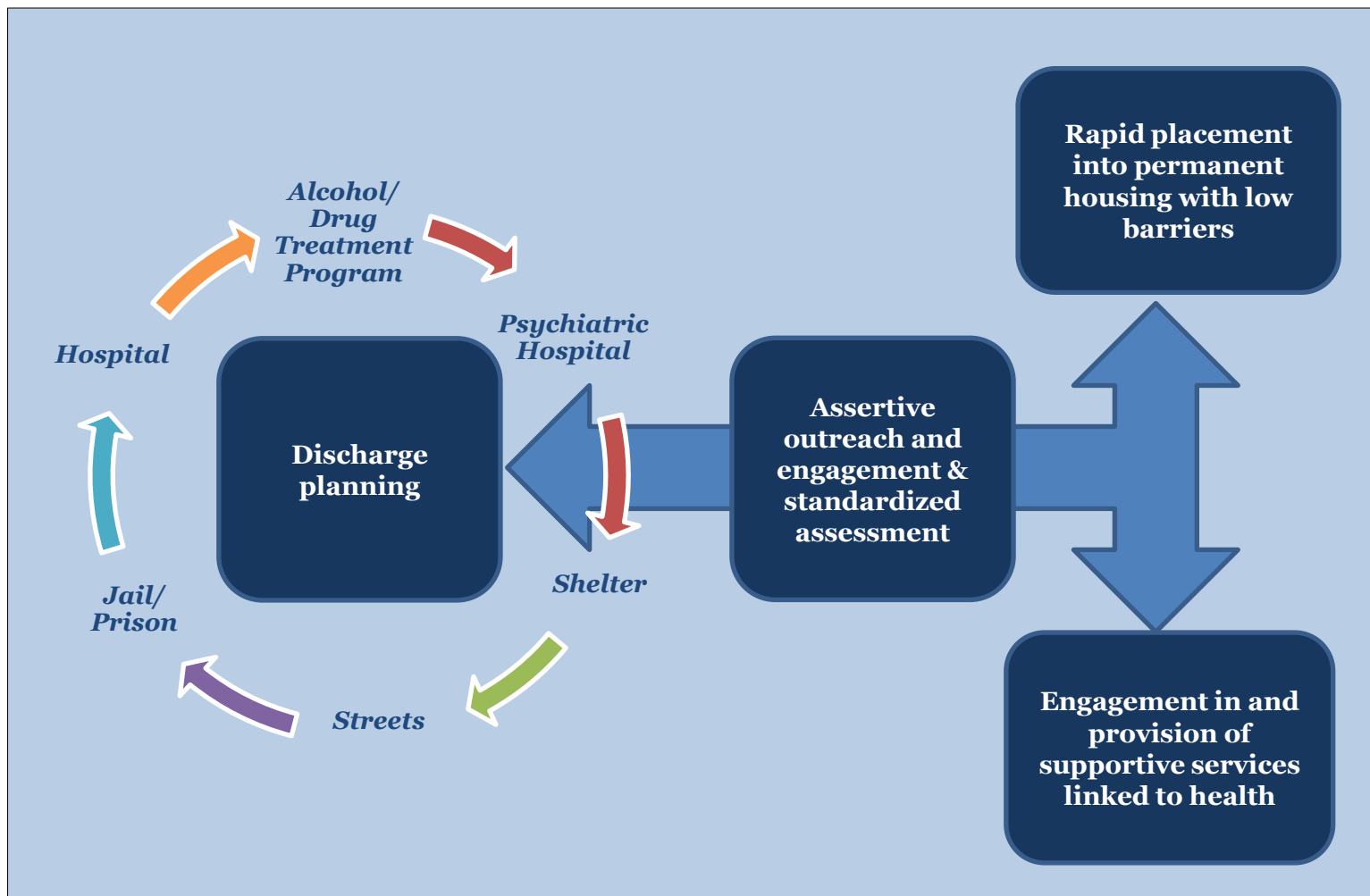
Retooled Crisis Response System

- **Access to services:** centralized access, coordinated street outreach, integration with mainstream systems

- **Assessment of individual/family situation and needs to right-size the intervention:** prevention, diversion, admit to shelter

- **Align housing interventions:** prevention, rapid re-housing, affordable housing, and permanent supportive housing

Create a Systems Approach

Expectations Under HEARTH

- Covers the Continuum's of Care (CoC's) geographic area

- Is easily accessible by households seeking housing or services

- Is well-advertised

- Uses a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool

- Responds to local needs and conditions

- Covers *at least* all CoC and Emergency Solution Grant (ESG) programs

VA's Vision for Systems

Ease the Burden & Improve Efficiency

- A centralized or coordinated assessment system is easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool that is person-centered and criteria-based.

- By having a more efficient entry process, better informed referrals, and more coordination between programs, it should be easier for people experiencing homelessness to get results.

Retooling our Questions

Question Many Programs Ask Now:

"Should we accept this individual/family into our housing/program?"

Question Systems Should Be Asking:

"Of the options available, which housing and service strategy is best for each individual/family?"

Community-Level Actions

- **Coordinate outreach and engagement** across community and institutional settings

- **Ensure local system has a full range of housing and services interventions**, including:
  - ✓ Permanent supportive housing
  - ✓ Critical time intervention services linked to housing
  - ✓ Access to affordable housing
  - ✓ Transitional housing focused on successful exits to permanent housing
  - ✓ Rapid re-housing

Community-Level Actions

- **Develop systems for aligning housing and services interventions** based upon assessments

- **Adopt Housing First** approaches that reduce barriers to and streamline housing entry

- **Provide supportive services** that place low demands on clients, but engage frequently

- **Prioritize people experiencing chronic homelessness for PSH** as part of coordinated assessment implementation

Example: Prioritizing for PSH

Shift from:

- Passive role in identifying prospective tenants

- First come, first served approach to allocating affordable and supportive housing

To:

- Proactive, assertive outreach that connects people with the highest needs to permanent housing

- Prioritization based on objective measures of need, vulnerability, and cost

Engaging Mainstream Systems and Resources

Engage Mainstream Housing

- Public Housing and Housing Choice Vouchers Programs

    - Notice PIH 2013-15 (HA)

- Multifamily Housing Developments

    – Notice H 2013-21

PHA Guidebook

- Planning
- Partnerships
- Programs and Policies
- http://usich.gov/usich_resources/pha_portal/

Engage Mainstream Systems

- Physical and behavioral health care systems

- Medicaid-funded services and Federally-Qualified Health Centers

- Workforce development system

- Benefits and income supports

Coordinated Assessment Can Help Build the System

- Helps bring partners to the table in newly collaborative and focused ways

- Helps communities understand and document the needs and strengths – the challenges and goals – of people experiencing homelessness

- Helps ensure efficient use of housing and services resources with a focus on outcomes

Coordinated Assessment Can Help Build the System

- Helps identify gaps within local crisis response system – and strategic opportunities for addressing those gaps

- Helps make case for involvement of mainstream systems and for investment of resources

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